

Message Text

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TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER)

SUBJ: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT JOSEPH ALSOP OP-ED COLUMN WEDNESDAY, MAY 15 WASHINGTON POST HEADLINED "THE CASE FOR PRESIDENTIAL RESIGNATION."

2. WITH CONSIDERABLE JUSTICE, THE WHITE HOUSE IS ATTRIBUTING A FAIRLY SORDID MOTIVE TO THE REPUBLICAN SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES WHO HAVE BEGUN CLAMORING FOR PRESIDENT NIXON'S RESIGNATION. MOST OF THEM DESPERATELY HANKER TO ESCAPE THE INHERENTLY DANGEROUS DUTY OF VOTING FOR OR AGAINST THE PRESIDENT'S IMPEACHMENT AND CONVICTION.

3. BUT THAT IS OF LITTLE CONSEQUENCE. IN TRUTH, IN THIS WHOLE DEBATE ABOUT THE PROS AND CONS OF VOLUNTARY PRESIDENTIAL RETIREMENT, THERE IS ONLY ONE NEGATIVE ARGUMENT THAT IS WORTH A TINKER'S DAM.

4. THIS IS THE ARGUMENT MOST FREQUENTLY PUT FORWARD BY THE ABLE AND DOWN-TO-EARTH WHITE HOUSE CHIEF OF STAFF,
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GEN. ALEXANDER HAIG. GENERAL HAIG HAS EMPHATICALLY WARNED

ALL SORTS OF PEOPLE--THE CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS IN PARTICULAR
--OF THE CURRENT THREAT TO THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM.
THE SYSTEM'S STABILITY WILL BE GRAVELY IMPAIRED, HE HAS
SAID, IF RICHARD M. NIXON IS PREMATURELY DRIVEN FROM OFFICE,

IMMEDIATELY AFTER LYNDON B. JOHNSON WAS SO BITTERLY
ATTACKED THAT HE REFUSED TO RUN AGAIN, SHORTLY FOLLOW-
ING JOHN F. KENNEDY'S MURDER IN COLD BLOOD.

5. AS A PRACTICAL FACT, HOWEVER, GENERAL HAIG'S WARNING
IS REALLY AN ARGUMENT AGAINST THE PRESIDENT'S IMPEACHMENT
AND CONVICTION, RATHER THAN AGAINST HIS VOLUNTARY
RESIGNATION. FOR THE AMERICAN SYSTEM'S STABILITY WILL
BE FAR LESS IMPAIRED BY VOLUNTARY RESIGNATION , TO
FORESTALL IMPEACHMENT AND CONVICTION, THAN IT WILL BE
IMPAIRED BY A PARALYZING "CONSTITUTIONAL"PROCESS REQUIR-
ING AT LEAST SIX TO EIGHT MONTHS TO PRODUCE THE SAME
RESULT.

6. MEANWHILE, IT IS ALSO A PRACTICAL FACT THAT THE ARGU-
MENTS IN FAVOR OF THE ,RESIDENT'S RESIGNATION ARE DAILY
GROWING STRONGER. THE STRONGEST ARGUMENT OF ALL, OF
COURSE, IS THE DIRE PUBLIC BACKLASH FROM THE RELEASE OF
THE WHITE HOUSE TAPES.

7. IN CONSEQUENCE, IT IS INCREASINGLY LIKELY THAT A
BILL OF IMPEACHMENT WILL BE VOTED BY A SUBSTANTIAL
MAJORITY OF THE HOUSE. IT IS INCREASINGLY LIKELY THAT
THE PRESIDENT'S "IRREDUCIBLE MINIMUM" OF SENATE SUPPORT
WILL THEN BE SO REDUCED THAT HE WILL BE CONVICTED. THIS
LIKELIHOOD CAN NO LONGER BE DENIED OR DUCKED. IT IS NOW
A FACT THAT ALL MUST FACE, INCLUDING THE PRESIDENT HIMSEL?

8. THERE IS ALSO ANOTHER, PROFOUNDLY IMPORTANT FACT THAT
ALL MUST FACE, NOTABLY INCLUDING THE PRESIDENT. THE
WATERGATE INDUCED QUASI-PARALYSIS OF THE U.S. GOVERN-
MENT IS ALREADY DANGEROUS; AND IT WILL GROW MORE AND
MORE DANGEROUS, WEEK BY WEEK, THROUGHOUT THE HALF YEAR
AND MORE REQUIRED FOR FORMAL IMPEACHMENT AND CONVICTION.

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9. THE EFFECTS OF THE QUASI-PARALYSIS ARE ALREADY OMNI-
PRESENT. AN AUTHORITATIVE ARTICLE IN A RECENT WALL
STREET JOURNAL, FOR INSTANCE, WARNS OF THE GROWING WEAK-
NESS OF THE NATION'S FINANCIAL SYSTEM, PARTLY RESULTING
FROM LOSS OF CONFIDENCE CAUSED BY WATERGATE. AGAIN,
BECAUSE WATERGATE HAS ALREADY ALL BUT OUTLAWED EFFECTIVE

PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP, WE HAVE NO SERIOUS ENERGY POLICY-

WE HAVE ONLY THE EMPTIEST KIND OF FAKE-POLICY--WHEN A FIRM ENERGY POLICY IS AN URGENT NATIONAL NEED.

10. YET THE WORST DANGER OF ALL IS IN THE BROADER FIELD

OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. THIS IS BEING HALF-CONCEALED FOR THE MOMENT BY THE BRILLIANCE AND RICH PROMISE OF THE MIDDLE EASTERN DIPLOMACY OF SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY A. KISSINGER. BUT ESPECIALLY IF THE PRESIDENT IS ACTUALLY IMPEACHED BY THE HOUSE, NO KISSINGERIAN BRILLIANCE CAN MAKE THE FOREIGN DANGER GO AWAY FOREVER.

11. TO BE SURE, IT IS SNIDE AND SECOND-RATE TO SUGGEST THAT A PRESIDENT FACING IMPEACHMENT WILL THEN SELL OUT THE U.S. IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH FOREIGN LEADERS. IT IS ON A PAR, IN FACT, WITH THE CHEAP STUFF WE HEARD WHEN THE PRESIDENT SO BRAVELY MET THE SOVIET THREAT TO INTERVENE IN THE YOM KIPPUR WAR BY ORDERING A WORLDWIDE U.S. MILITARY ALERT.

12. ON ALL SIDES, SECOND-RATERS THEN SUGGESTED THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS ONLY TRYING TO DISTRACT ATTENTION FROM WATERGATE. BUT NOW THE FORMER SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO EGYPT, VLADIMIR VINOGRADOFF, HAS GIVEN INTERVIEWS TO ARAB NEWSPAPERS FLATLY STATING THAT AT THE TIME OF THE U.S. MILITARY ALERT, THE KREMLIN WAS FULLY READY TO SEND SEVEN AIRBORNE DIVISIONS TO JOIN THE SINAI FIGHTING.

13. THE WATERGATE-INDUCED PARALYSIS OF U.S. POLICY-MAKING IS THE REAL SOURCE OF THE FOREIGN DANGER, IN FACT. IT IS A PLAIN HISTORICAL FACT THAT EVIDENCE OF TEMPORARY U.S. WEAKNESS HAS ALWAYS CONSTITUTED AN IRRESISTIBLE TEMPTATION TO THE KREMLIN. ALMOST AUTOMATICALLY, EVER

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SINCE THE SECOND WORLD WAR, THE KREMLIN HAS ALWAYS YIELDED TO THIS KIND OF TEMPTATION BY TAKING ROUGH AND RISKY ACTION.

14. IMAGINE, THEN, THE TEMPTATION TO THE KREMLIN OF A PARALYZED U.S. GOVERNMENT. REMEMBER THAT THE DANGER WILL BE ALL THE WORSE IF SECRETARY KISSINGER SCORES A GREAT MIDDLE EASTERN SUCCESS, THEREBY MAKING THE KREMLIN EAGER TO SCORE HEAVILY SOMEWHERE ELSE. THESE ARE THE REASONS FOR THINKING THE PRESIDENT WILL EVENTUALLY HAVE TO GIVE MORE SERIOUS THOUGHT TO RESIGNATION THAN HE IS SAID TO BE GIVING TODAY. (END TEXT.) RUSH

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